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ABSTRACT

While demographic diversity among the student body has increased substantially over the past several decades, the academic, economic, and social diversity of students will play a greater part in shaping [illegible]

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Demographics: Diversity in More Forms

Student Demographics, Now and the Future

Presented at the
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Demographics: Diversity in More Forms

Student Demographics, Now and the Future

Introduction

When people in higher education hear the term diversity, they tend to think of demographic diversity, i.e., racial, ethnic, gender and possibly age. Over the past several years, this type of diversity has been broadened to include disability. While diversity in this area has increased substantially over the past several decades, the authors submit that this is not the only type of diversity, or perhaps even the major type, that will be impacting staffing for community colleges over the next decade. Our belief is that the effects of other types of diversity, academic, economic and social, will prove to play a greater part in upcoming staffing and faculty requirements than will the demographic diversity of the student body.

Demographic

While there have been major changes in the demographic diversity of four-year colleges and universities over the past several decades, the greatest changes have occurred within community colleges. A comparison of fall 1980 and fall 1994 data for two of the institutions of higher education in Tallahassee, Florida State University (FSU) and Tallahassee Community College (TCC), shows that the percent of minority students has remained fairly constant at FSU, changing from seventeen to twenty, while the percent at TCC has increased from nineteen to twenty-nine. The third institution in Tallahassee, Florida A and M University, was not included due to their unique mission.

Changes in the age distributions are less dramatic. While both FSU and TCC aged slightly between fall 1991 and fall 1994, the undergraduates at FSU are still much younger than persons taking their first two years at TCC.

In the fall of 1994, FSU served 563 registered disabled students. The total enrollment was 29,630 or 1.9% disabled. TCC served about one hundred fewer disabled students, 451, but the total credit enrollment was only 9,675, thus the percentage of disabled (4.7%) was much higher.

While TCC appears to be more diverse in these areas than FSU, due to its heavy emphasis on university parallel programs, it is not truly typical of community colleges. According to an EDINFO report published by the ERIC Clearinghouse for Community Colleges:

1. Community colleges enroll 44% of all undergraduates and 49% of first-time freshmen.

2. About 47% of minorities enrolled in higher education attend community colleges. (About 30% of the Florida Community College System enrollment is minority.)

3. Women make up 58% of community college enrollments.

4. The average age of students is 29; the median age is 25; the modal age is 19.

Academic

Just as with demographic diversity, there is a wide range of academic diversity on community college campuses. This range spans the gamut of students from those who were valedictorians and in honors classes to students needing remediation in English, writing and mathematics. The open door policy means that anyone with a high school diploma is admitted and, if they are pursuing an Associate in Arts degree, later placed into either college level courses or remedial based upon the results of a placement test.

Over the past five years, the percent of entering TCC students needing at least one remedial course has risen from about 60 to 70 percent. The mathematics section of the placement test is the controlling section in terms of remediation because more students fail it than any other. This high failure rate has resulted in a large number of students being unable to successfully compete at the

community college level. A fall 1991 FTIC cohort study at TCC, including both full and part-time students, indicated that degree-seeking students needing no remediation had a four-year graduation rate of 31 percent. Persons needing only one area of remediation had a four-year rate of 20 percent, while those needing two or three areas had rates of seven and four respectively.

Economic

Economic diversity may be the fastest growing of the types under consideration. During 1994-95, twenty-three point four percent of the credit students who attended TCC receive some type of financial aid. This was an increase of almost four percentage points over the previous year. Of the over eight million dollars awarded, 24% of the awards amounting to 43% of the money was in the form of loans. This was the first time since records have been kept that the major monetary source of the aid was the Federally Insured Loans. The increases this past year merely continue the trend toward loans and away from grants. The previous year's figures for loans had been 20% of the awards and 37% of the money.

Another economically based program is Carl Perkins. These are federal funds distributed to the vocational side of the house for specific groups of disadvantaged students such as displaced homemakers. The amount of funds received is related to a college's ability to identify economically disadvantaged students including those receiving Pell, JTPA or Project Independence funds. In addition, colleges receive extra FTE's for courses taken by students in the Project Independence program, a program related to using training to remove people from the state services rolls. Preliminary data indicated that the Florida Community College System served over 39,000 of these students in 1994-95.

There are other programs that provide an incentive to the college to not only identify

economically disadvantaged students, but also recruit them. The main one for Florida's community colleges is Performance Based Incentive Funding. Under this program, community colleges receive money for each documented case of enrolling, graduating and placing individuals involved with the JTPA program as well as other criteria.

While all of these are certainly worthy programs, the incentives to enroll economically disadvantaged students may have exceeded the college's ability to provide support services, thereby, resulting in a lower quality educational experience for these students.

Social

The final type of diversity is social. The community college system is the entry point for many first-generation students. As ACCESS, a publication devoted to improving diversity in student recruiting and retention, notes:

> "These new students to higher education often face unique challenges in their quest for a degree: conflicting obligations, false expectations, and lack of preparation or support are among the factors that may hinder their success."

They are characterized as being

> "...on the margin of two cultures--that of their friends and family and that of their college community. Parents, siblings, and friends who have no experience of college or its rewards may be non-supportive or even obstructionist."

Another type of social disadvantage is experienced by our students who are incarcerated. In fall 1994, the state community college system served 1,224 individuals who were in various levels of the local, state and federal prison systems.

Implications

As Table 3 illustrates and was referenced earlier in conjunction with academic diversity, not all groups of students are being impacted in the same way by their college experience. The percent

of entering students who are minority is 35.4. The percent of graduates who are minority is 19.8. The cohort study implied that the graduation rate of fully prepared students is at least one and one-half times that of under prepared students. This loss of human potential may have been acceptable from a training standpoint when the economy provided a multitude of jobs at a good wage that did not require any type of postsecondary education. However, the anticipated new jobs and areas of growth, while not necessarily requiring bachelors, will require a skilled education. According to Parnell, by the year 2000 eighty percent of new jobs will require more than a high school degree, but less than a 4-year degree; and forty-four percent of all jobs will include collecting, analyzing, synthesizing, storing, and retrieving data. The lack of mathematical skills as illustrated by the high failure rate on that section of the placement tests does not bode well for community college students being able to fully participate in the job market of the future.

As we investigate ways of serving our incoming students, whether we view community colleges as a source of training and/or education, we must consider the various origins of potential problems and not use one type of diversity to mask the effects of the others. For example, when academic preparation is included in regression equations, at least at TCC, the effect of race and gender become non-significant. The relationship between academic preparation and economic status has been verified by numerous studies. One of the best ways to have high ACT or SAT scores is to choose your parents wisely and be born into the top socioeconomic status (SES) category. Another aspect of economic diversity is the growing body of evidence that implies the economically disadvantaged are not just middle class families with less money. Rather, families that have been in poverty or at economic risk for long periods of time have developed their own culture including ways of interacting that may not be appropriate to a college campus. This same type of relationship

appears to hold true for the academically disadvantaged as well. That is, these are not middle-class people who have not been exposed to certain information, but rather they are more like people from a different culture who need specific support services. It is this type of interaction among different characteristics that must be remembered as intervention strategies are developed.

How will the need for innovative intervention strategies impact the institutions' staffing requirements? It seems clear that there will be a need to hire both faculty and staff who are aware of the impact and inter-relationships between these different types of diversity. There will also be the need to ensure these people are flexible in their teaching methods and have had training in serving the needs of various types of students.

Diversity and its Impact on the Delivery of Services in Student Development

The impact of the changes in diversity in our society over the past twenty years has had a direct influence on the population of persons entering higher education institutions. The community college system with it's "open door" policy is a microcosm of our society. The community college system attempts to respond to the needs of the "new" student populations with programs aimed at maximizing their success.

A review of the "traditional programs" will help people better understand the need to take a critical look at the inter-relationships between the different types of diversity and the need for programs which address these concerns.

Ten years ago, when there was a need to increase under represented populations on campus, the emphasis was on programs that informed students about the programs and services of the college. Emphasis was placed on recruitment activities, orientation programs and public relations activities that told the story about the many assets of Tallahassee Community College. The traditional 18 year

old student could expect to come to campus and experience many of the same activities familiar to them in high school, for example: new student orientation, early registration and academic advising. For the student interested in participating in extracurricular activities, the college traditionally had available clubs such as Student Government, Debate Team, service clubs, thespian clubs, and Phi Theta Kappa.

The need to recruit under represented groups is no longer present. That job was done well. Now the responsibility is to respond to the populations enrolled on our campus. The make up of the student population over the last 5 - 10 years has changed significantly.

While there has almost always been a traditional age of 24 for our student population, the campus has seen an increase in the population referred to as the mature student. There has also been an increase in the numbers of minority students and students from rural communities, as well as the student who is the "first generation college student."

Our population has taken another shift in the last five years. As a result of special funding at the state and federal level and legal mandates, we serve greater numbers of special "at-risk" populations such as disabled, returning veterans, displaced workers (formerly displaced homemakers) and single parents.

So what types of inter-relationships have been experienced as a result of our new "diversities" at TCC? What types of intervention strategies have been developed? How have program activities and budget been impacted?

The Counseling Office retains the responsibility for many of the activities that affect all of our students. The Office is responsible for orientation, registration, advising, CLAST, career counseling, disabled student services and general student concerns.

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Changes that have occurred include the development of a program to address the needs of students with disabilities. The program has impacted general operation in a large way. A full-time counselor and program coordinator, who were once part of the general counseling personnel, have been devoted to this effort. Orientation and training have been conducted for all counseling personnel to deal with the types of students who will be admitted through this program. Students in this program include persons with physical, emotional, and learning disabilities. As a result, guidelines for providing special services have had to be developed. These services include, but are not limited to, tutoring, note taking, counseling, untimed testing, computer adapted testing, computer adapted classroom intervention, and arranging interpreters. Child care services are not available on our campus and that continues to be a concern for single parents. Surveys have been taken to determine the need and liability issues have been considered.

Working with these students requires a lot of intervention with faculty members as well. Many times these students need special assistance because of such issues as conflicting obligations, lack of preparation and lack of support.

The campus has experienced a great increase in the number of students with emotional problems. These students present a real challenge. The staff has learned a great deal about medication management and the mental health delivery system as a whole. Like many other community colleges, TCC does not have a formal crisis intervention team. Each individual situation has been responded to as it arose. Recently, a committee has been established to develop procedures for intervention when a student has to be removed from class and subsequently from campus.

A new issue that has arisen as a result of students who come to campus without any previous orientation to "college life" is the conflict between the student's expectations of what should happen

on campus and the expectations of college officials. There have been increased incidents of student discipline issues: student decorum in the classroom, student/faculty conflicts, student/student conflicts, male/female relationships. The counseling office has developed a mediation procedure between faculty and staff. The office staff finds itself participating on more disciplinary action hearings. Each student is given the student conduct code booklet when they enter the college, but a new program being discussed, is to return to a form of the traditional orientation with emphasis on issues that have arisen as a result of the new diversities.

It has been very beneficial for the staff to work within the existing committee structure on campus. This way the faculty, staff and administration have been continuously informed of new developments. The counseling office has been given lead responsibility many times to develop interventions as they are seen as front line officials. Lastly, it requires a certain kind of knowledge and sensitivity to stay on top of the ever changing populations faced in higher education. As professionals in the field, the staff need to develop communication linkages and share experiences, what works and does not from campus to campus, recommend literature that would help enlighten professionals about the people the colleges are attempting to serve. Diversity will remain a component of our society and thus be represented on campuses. As professionals, counselors need to be keenly aware that these populations require a renewed commitment, that often is time consuming and involves re-training and special effort on the part of the professionals who are concerned with their academic success. In many ways, the new diversity of students has created a new job for the counseling staff.

Diversity and Its Impact on Faculty

The total enrollment in eleven sections of remedial mathematics in the spring of 1996 was

274. Sixty-eight (24.8%) of the students disappeared sometime during the semester. One hundred forty-eight (54%) of the students either disappeared or failed the course. Minority students represented 40% of the enrollment and accounted for 46% of the number of students who either disappeared or failed. What happened to these students? Where did they go? Why did they fail?

Earlier in this paper it was noted that today's remedial students face a variety of challenges that often hinder their success. Among these challenges are conflicting obligations, false expectations, and lack of preparation or support. As students seek to address these challenges, they bring to the classroom a corresponding set of challenges for faculty.

Conflicting Obligations

Conflicting obligations fall into three general categories: work, family, and social. The vast majority of community college students work either full time or part time. For many it is a necessity and not something they are choosing to do. They simply must work. Students are sometimes called in to work during class time, or sleep through class because they have worked a night shift and cannot stay awake. They often work so many hours that they do not have sufficient time to study. Work is, and must be, a priority for many students. However, it can interfere with their class work in a number of ways. A student who misses class, or sleeps through class, has missed that material and may not be able to understand subsequent lessons. A student who has insufficient time to complete homework, or study, ultimately falls behind and drops out or fails.

Many remedial students also have family obligations. They may have a spouse and children, they may be single parents, or they may have siblings, aging parents, or relatives for whom they have to care for. The family members may or may not be supportive of their efforts to go to college. Regardless of the support students receive at home, certain obligations have to be met. Family

members have to be cared for in one way or another, and it is often only after all other responsibilities have been fulfilled that a student may be able to sit down to do his or her homework. The time is often insufficient to complete assignments, and the student is often too tired to study effectively. Grades go down, self-esteem plummets, and students drop out of school.

Social obligations also present problems for some students. For younger students it may be involvement in campus activities or fraternities and sororities. For others it may be time given to community service activities or church related activities. These are often important, even integral, parts of students' lives and should not be minimized. They do, however, take up valuable time that may be needed for study if the student is to be successful. For many students, work, family, and social obligations combine to compete with school related activities, and it is difficult for students to find a workable balance between these facets of their lives.

False Expectations

Many students face a variety of false expectations when they come to college. They are frequently unaware of the heavy time commitments that college work requires. This is especially true for remedial students who may require more rather than less study time for each subject. The students falsely believe that as long as they set aside time to attend class, the rest of their time is discretionary. Class attendance itself is often a problem for many students. Students initially believe that they can do well if they miss class and, often, it is not until it is too late that they realize the fallacy of this logic.

Other false expectations relate to the amount of effort required to succeed in college, and the issue of personal responsibility. These are issues that affect many college students, especially those just making the transaction from high school to college. The pace of college courses, as well as

content, require that students expend a significant amount of effort if they are to be successful. It is also requisite that students take personal responsibility for their success or failure. Frequently faculty and advisors hear students claim that a certain professor "failed them" or "gave them an F". It is often difficult for students to understand that faculty do not have the power to fail someone simply on a whim, or because of personality conflicts, and that both faculty and students are accountable.

Sometimes students are shocked and angry when they place into remedial courses. The public is sadly aware that a high school diploma does not mean the same thing for all students. Although the legislature in Florida is moving to change graduation requirements, students can receive a high school diploma with a 1.5 grade point average and be admissible to the community college. It is also true that standards vary for district to district. What may constitute average achievement in one district may be deemed above or below average in another. Consequently, students sometimes have false expectations with regard to their academic achievement. They have been led to believe that they are ready for college work when, if fact, they are not. Many of these students are upset and they have a right to be.

Diversity, in all its many faces, brings to the classroom many experiences, cultural differences, and notions of acceptable personal conduct. What is quite normal and acceptable behavior for a student in his or her own social environment, may be quite outside the experience of the faculty member. Language that is normal for one group, may be offensive to another. What is perceived as "speaking my mind" by a student may be perceived as "talking back" to a faculty member. Different cultural norms bring about myriad opportunities for misunderstandings that have the potential to be blown out of proportion without careful classroom management and time for

reflection.

Lack of Preparation and Support

Lack of preparation takes three forms: academic, emotional, and social/cultural. Lack of academic preparation is the primary reason that so many students require remedial courses in college. As previously mentioned, it is not necessarily the fault of the students that they lack adequate academic preparation. Sometimes it is poor advising, poor teaching, or inadequate resources, rather than an unwillingness to learn.

Lack of emotional preparation is a factor that impinges on the success of some students. Students frequently do not have the self-discipline or maturity to be successful. This does not mean that they do not have the ability, simply that they are not ready for the rigors of college life.

With regard to social and cultural preparation, some students are not prepared to function in a social milieu that differs from their own. This leads to many of the problems discussed relative to acceptable conduct. Any college environment, especially a community college environment, will have students with a wide variety of backgrounds. Yet, within the classroom, there is generally a narrow range of behaviors that will be tolerated by a given faculty member. Students must be able to adapt and conform if they are to be successful.

For some students, it is not lack of preparation that stands in their way, but lack of support of one sort or another. For many it is financial support that hinders their progress. Possibly, they are ineligible for financial aid, or financial aid is insufficient. This, of course, leads to working too many hours and conflict between school and work.

Lack of family support or emotional support are often issues, especially for the older, returning student. The spouse or children may be unwilling to help with chores or make other

contributions or sacrifices that allow the student the necessary time and flexibility required for academic success. The student is made to feel guilty for spending more time studying and less time with his or her family. Sometimes students will report that their families just can not understand the responsibilities and stress that accompany enrollment in college courses. The subsequent isolation they feel from their families becomes unbearable and often leads them to withdraw from school.

What Can Faculty Do?

Faculty who teach remedial courses can no longer just be experts in their content area. Rather, their field must be broadened to include expertise in many concepts related to classroom management, negotiation, and conflict resolution. Faculty are in a position of power. This should not be taken lightly, but advisedly, and used to provide professional but realistic role models for students. Faculty should maintain high and consistent standards.. At the same time, however, they need to be understanding when problems arise. In every class there will be times.when a student is sick, or has a sick child, a car that won't start, a stolen book they can't afford to replace, and many other minor tragedies that seem major to the student. Good communication between the faculty member and the student can help to minimize the damage to the student's performance.

Faculty have a responsibility to provide students with timely and accurate advising, and to help them learn the "system". Frequently there are options for students of which they are unaware. For example, a student misses a final exam and receives an F because her mother goes into the hospital and the student did not know that she could petition for an incomplete grade. A student's work schedule changes and he drops out of school rather than trying to transfer to another section because he was unaware of the possibility. Many parts of the "system" function on a one-to-one basis and may be impossible for the student to navigate without good guidance.

Within the classroom, faculty must define the boundaries of acceptable behavior and then be tolerant and flexible within those boundaries. Maximize understanding and cooperation, and minimize conflict and embarrassment. Faculty in remedial programs must not only teach the content to the best of their ability, but also provide students with the tools for success, including both domain-specific and more general study skills. A professor may be brilliant in his or her delivery, but if students don't know when and how to take notes, how to read their textbook, how to manage their time, and how to utilize available resources, they will likely be unsuccessful.

Students will leave school at some point, with or without their degree, and go to work. Almost all types of work require interaction with others. Classroom experiences that incorporate student interaction can be used to maximize understanding of the content and build teamwork at the same time. Cooperative activities also help to set a more relaxed and cohesive tone to the class, not just between the students, but between the faculty and the students. A good relationship between the faculty member and the students is essential if progress is to take place with a minimum of disruption and conflict. In addition to being a teacher, faculty must also be a mentor, a counselor, and sometimes, a friend.

What Can Institutions Do?

First and foremost, institutions need to be sure that their counseling capacity keeps pace with the needs of the student body. As discussed earlier in this paper, the face of the student body is changing, and with those changes come needs that must be addressed primarily by the counseling departments. Faculty who feel unable to address problems themselves frequently refer them to the counseling department. Well trained professionals, capable of dealing with a variety of situations which are not necessarily academic in nature are essential.

Institutions need to improve advising, especially for freshmen and college preparatory (remedial) students. Students placing in remedial courses should be required to take an orientation course that teaches basic college survival skills. Hand in hand with advising, goes mentoring. Mentoring programs need to be put in place, or expanded, so that incoming remedial students have an internal support system. This should include student to student mentoring as well as faculty to student mentoring.

Diversity training should be provided for faculty, staff, and student. All areas of the community college need to be sensitive to the many facets of diversity. They also need to be aware that diversity goes well beyond the issues of race, ethnicity, or gender.

Finally, in keeping with providing professional, but realistic role models, institutions should increase their efforts to recruit qualified minority faculty. The minority in question may change according to the demographics of the region in which college is located, but efforts should be made to see that the diversity of the student body is matched by the diversity of the faculty.

Table 1
Percents

Characteristic	*Fall 1980*		*Fall 1994*	
	FSU	*TCC*	*FSU*	*TCC*
White	83.3	80.8	80.0	70.8
Black	8.6	16.5	9.6	23.0
Hispanic	1.7	1.8	5.5	3.8
Asian	0.4	0.6	2.3	1.4
Amer. Indian	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.5
Non-Res. Alien	1.7		2.3	
Unknown	4.2			0.5
Male	47.4	42.5	46.0	46.0
Female	52.6	57.5	54.0	54.0

Source: FSU - Headcount Enrollments, Fall (Preliminary) Student Data Course File
TCC - 1980, In-House Records; 1994 - Fall Student Data Base

Table 2
*Age Percents**

	Fall 1991		*Fall 1994*	
	FSU	*TCC*	*FSU*	*TCC*
17 & below	0.4	4.0	0.3	4.4
18-22	78.6	59.2	76.2	56.5
23-25	12.2	12.5	13.5	15.2
26-30	4.7	9.6	5.2	10.0
31-35	1.7	5.4	2.1	5.3
36-40	1.2	4.1	1.2	3.8
41 & above	1.2	5.4	1.5	4.9

*Age groupings taken from FSU. FSU percents based upon undergraduates only.
Source: Same as Table 1

Table 3
Ethnicity of Various Levels of Students Credit Students
Tallahassee Community College
Fall 1994

Ethnicity	*Duals*	*FTIC*	*Freshmen*	*Sophomore*	*Certificate Seeking*	*Graduates*	*Total*
Amer. Indian	0.78	0.51	0.52	0.38	0.50	0.77	0.49
Asian	2.59	1.30	1.22	1.38	3.47	2.06	1.42
Black	16.84	29.35	26.52	18.04	11.39	11.60	22.90
Hispanic	1.81	4.20	3.67	3.94	2.97	4.38	3.77
White	77.98	64.64	67.62	75.48	81.68	80.15	70.96
Not Reported	0.00	0.00	.045	0.78	0.00	1.03	0.49

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